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E.O. 12958: N/A

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## Pyongyang Urges Seoul to "Implement June 15 Joint Declaration and October 4 Declaration"

### Domestic Developments

1 In a joint editorial by North Korean media, regarded as an official New Year's message, Pyongyang stressed its efforts to achieve denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula and showed an eagerness to talk with a new USG over its nuclear program, while blaming the Lee Myung-bak Administration for its failure to honor inter-Korean agreements. (All prints and TVs)

2 ROK civic groups resumed sending about 3,000 anti-Pyongyang flyers to North Korea in a month near the inter-Korean border yesterday. (JoongAng, Dong-a, Chosun)

3 In a survey of 32 ROK experts, 13 considered it "possible" to move toward North Korea's nuclear dismantlement within 2009, while 15 people responded that top-level U.S.-North Korea talks are unlikely in 2009. (Hankyoreh)

### International News

1 According to a report on the admission of refugees to the U.S., submitted by the Departments of State, Homeland Security, and Health and Human Services to the Judiciary Committees of Congress, the U.S. will accept up to 80,000 refugees from around the world, giving preference to families of North Korean defectors during Fiscal Year 2009. (All prints and TVs)

### Media Analysis

#### North Korea

All newspapers reported on a joint editorial carried by the North Korean media, which is regarded as Pyongyang's official New Year's message. In the editorial, Pyongyang stressed its efforts to achieve denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula and claimed eagerness to discuss its nuclear program with a new US Administration. Editorialists blamed the Lee Myung-bak Administration for its failure to honor inter-Korean agreements. Right-of-center JoongAng Ilbo headlined its story: "Pyongyang Describes ROK Authorities as 'Fascists' for the First Time in 14 Years, Heralding a Tough Road Ahead for Inter-Korean Relations." JoongAng Ilbo also editorialized: "The (North Korean joint) editorial skipped the usual tirades against the U.S. and its presence in the ROK, suggesting that Pyongyang believes it can build better Washington-Pyongyang ties with the incoming Obama Administration." Moderate Hankook Ilbo editorialized: "It is regrettable that, in the joint editorial, North Korea made clear its intention to pursue the strategy of 'Tongmi Bongnam,' under which the North engages with the U.S. while sidelining the ROK. However, that the North restrained itself from criticizing the U.S. and mentioned the achievement of denuclearization in the Korean Peninsula and peace and security in Northeast Asia seem to be a positive message toward the incoming Obama Administration."

All newspapers carried reports on the joint Departments of State, Homeland Security, and Health and Human Services agreement on refugees recently submitted to the Judiciary Committees of Congress. According to the report, the U.S. will accept up to 80,000 refugees from around the world and give preference to families of North Korean defectors during Fiscal Year 2009.

Left-leaning Hankyoreh Shinmun asked 32 experts about the security outlook of the Korean Peninsula. A majority speculated that in 2009, the U.S. and North Korea will have strengthened relations, while inter-Korean relations will remain deadlocked.

#### Middle East

Conservative Chosun Ilbo reported that Israel is using bunker-buster missiles, which it received recently from the U.S., in strikes against Hamas targets in the Gaza Strip. The report also cited speculation in the Arab world that Palestine's moderate Fatah faction and Israel are colluding to "blight" Hamas. Conservative Dong-a Ilbo reported that a high-ranking Hamas figure, who has led

suicide terrorism against Israel, was killed in an Israeli air strike and that French President Sarkozy will visit the Middle East on January 5 to mediate peace in the region. Meanwhile, moderate Hankook Ilbo carried reports that Israel rejected the international community's proposal for a ceasefire while Hamas accepted it on the condition that Israel will stop its attack.

On a different note, JoongAng Ilbo reported that Obama is emerging as the biggest variable in a series of elections slated for this year in Middle Eastern countries, since he is advocating a different Middle East policy from that of the Bush Administration.

#### Opinions/Editorials

"North Korea Returns to the Past with Its Strategy of 'Tongmi Bongnam'"  
(Hankook Ilbo, January 2, 2009, Page 31)

"It is regrettable that, in the joint editorial, North Korea made clear its intention to pursue the strategy of 'Tongmi Bongnam,' under which the North engages with the U.S. while sidelining the ROK. However, it seems to be a positive message toward the incoming Obama Administration that the North restrained itself from criticizing the U.S. and mentioned desire to achieve denuclearization in the Korean Peninsula and peace and security in Northeast Asia. On the other hand, Pyongyang did not hesitate to strongly criticize the Lee Myung-bak Administration, urging it to implement the June 15 Joint Declaration and October 4 Declaration. It is evident that North Korea's engagement with the U.S. works well only when it is premised on its engagement with the South. North Korea's confrontational attitude toward the South is unsettling."

Frustrating Editorial  
(JoongAng Ilbo, January 2, 2009, Page 34)

The annual lengthy editorial was published in the North Korean regime's Rodong Sinmun newspaper yesterday. The publication is the official newspaper of the military and young party members. The New Year editorial usually offers some insight in the direction of the country's policies at home and abroad.

This year's piece made unusually frequent remarks about economic issues, including the need for self-aided economic growth. It skipped the usual tirades against the United States and its presence in South Korea and reaffirmed that it would maintain a hard-line stance toward the Lee Myung-bak Administration.

The North's stance is more frustrating than ever before. Yesterday's editorial said Pyongyang will "never tolerate any elements that deviate" from the principles of the June 15 and Oct. 4 joint declarations made at the two Koreas' summits in 2000 and 2007 with Seoul's two former liberal presidents. This policy means that the North is unlikely to make any major policy changes, indicating that Pyongyang still is not ready to deal with the new administration in Seoul.

Seoul has been adopting an increasingly progressive tone to its policies on the North over the past few months, slowly focusing more on dialogue with Pyongyang. But the North is showing no signs of moving on. It's like a hedgehog with its prickles unfurled, ready to puncture an approaching hand.

If the latest development is aimed at causing political disruptions within Korea and weakening the public's unity, as the North did during the Cold War, it would be fair to call the editorial anachronistic.

We strongly urge the North to take constructive steps toward building better inter-Korean ties. Seoul has to make an effort, too, to resume talks with Pyongyang. Its political slogan "improvement of inter-Korean relations based on principles" should be more than just an excuse to justify the lack of policies aimed at thawing frozen inter-Korean ties.

The usual tirades and hostile remarks toward Washington were conspicuously absent from yesterday's editorial, suggesting that

Pyongyang believes it can build better Washington-Pyongyang ties with the incoming Obama Administration.

This is a positive step since Obama has repeatedly stressed the need for "tough and direct" dialogue with Pyongyang. But such progress can be made only when the North is willing and determined to unravel its nuclear issues with Washington in a transparent way that leaves no questions unanswered.

\* This is a translation provided by the newspaper, and it is identical to the Korean version.

Let U.S. Congress be an Example to Korean Lawmakers  
(Chosun Ilbo, January 2, 2009, Page 31)

January is a busy month for the U.S. Congress. President-elect Barack Obama will meet on Monday with Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House of Representatives, to discuss the passage of a US\$1 trillion economic recovery bill. Pelosi has said she will make sure that the new president will be able to sign the bill right after he is inaugurated on Jan. 20. Republican lawmaker and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell and House Republican Leader John Boehner have vowed to do everything necessary to save the U.S. economy. They propose to hold a week-long hearing to reveal the full details of the bill through public debate. The House of Representatives will hold a hearing starting next Wednesday, which will be attended by academics and representatives from the business community.

The Senate, meanwhile, has said it will make sure that confirmation hearings on Obama's Cabinet appointees in the economic, foreign and national security areas can be wrapped up before he is inaugurated.

Here in Korea, lawmakers have also vowed to revive the economy and overcome the obstacles facing their country. Ruling Grand National Party leader Park Hee-tae said lawmakers must succeed in saving the economy, which is a pledge the party made to the public in the presidential and general elections. Main opposition Democratic Party leader Chung Se-kyun said his party will take the lead in overcoming the country's obstacles by tapping into its experience in leadership. But it was empty talk.

For a week now, the DP's lawmakers have locked themselves in the main hall of the National Assembly to block the passage of major reform bills. Opposition lawmakers have fastened mountain-climbing ropes to their hips so they can form a human chain and have brought mattresses into the main hall where they have been eating and sleeping. The GNP is in emergency stand-by mode. Ruling and opposition party representatives agreed Wednesday to continue talks on deadlocked issues, while the GNP has conceded by postponing passage of a controversial broadcast reform bill, but the situation is uncertain. As a result, bills that are crucial to easing the financial burden on low-income Koreans have yet to be ratified. They include 15 bills needed to implement the 2009 budget, measures to limit interest charged by loan sharks, and steps to ease the rent burden on Koreans without their own homes.

According to a New Year's Gallup Korea poll, 68 percent of respondents said Koreans had "no hope," while only 30 percent said they had "some hope left." In contrast, a joint survey by ABC and the Washington Post showed 63 percent of Americans were optimistic about 2009. The reason behind the starkly contrasting views can be explained by the busy schedules of American lawmakers and the contrasting behavior of Korean Assembly members.

\* This is a translation provided by the newspaper, and it is identical to the Korean version.

## Features

U.S. Allots Quota For East Asian Refugees  
(Chosun Ilbo, January 2, 2009, Page 2)

By Reporter Lee Ha-won

The U.S. has agreed to accept 80,000 refugees in 2009. 19,000 of this quota is to be for refugees from East Asia, including North

Korea, China, Tibet, and Burma. The 100 refugees from the region seeking to join their families already in the U.S. will have priority.

According to a report the State Department and the Department of Homeland Security jointly worked out and submitted to Congress, the quota for refugees from East Asia for 2009 is 19,000, down 1,000 from 2008. Last year the U.S. accepted 17,000 refugees from Burma and 1,000 refugees from Vietnam.

How many North Korean refugees will be accepted is not specified, but they are to come under the Priority-1 Group, where each refugee will be screened individually, and Priority-3 Group, where refugees will be given priority in joining family members already in the U.S. Some 600 refugees will be let in under Category P-1 and 100 under Category P-3.

The report expresses grave concern about human rights of North Koreans both in the Stalinist country and in nearby countries like China. It said the U.S., which has helped North Korean refugees resettle since 2006, will continue the program.

A total of 75 North Korean refugees have settled in the U.S. Since the U.S. first accepted a North Korean refugee under the North Korean Human Rights Act of 2004.

\* This is a translation provided by the newspaper, and it is identical to the Korean version.

Activists Resume Anti-N.Korea Leaflet Campaign  
(Chosun Ilbo, January 2, 2009, Page 8)  
By Reporter Seon Jeong-min

Activists resumed sending anti-communist leaflets to North Korea after a month-long voluntary suspension at the request of the government and the ruling party. Some 50 members of an association of 24 conservative civic groups on Thursday gathered in Imjingak Plaza in Paju, Gyeonggi Province, to attach 3,000 leaflets to one large balloon and 300 other small balloons to send to North Korea for an hour at 2:40 p.m.

The leaflets contain criticism of the North Korean regime, comparing the luxurious life of leader Kim Jong-il with the dire food shortages elsewhere in the country. . Some nightscape pictures of Seoul and Pyongyang, and food aid to North Korea, were also included.

Choi Woo-won, co-leader of the association, said, "The Sunshine Policy is obviously a failure, since millions of North Koreans have died of starvation despite several billion tons of food aid by the South Korean government over the last 10 years. The Unification Ministry also does not have any right to prevent civic groups sending leaflets."

Due to a mild breeze, the members could only send 3,000 out of the 30,000 leaflets they prepared. "We will hold a massive rally in about 10 days," said Choi. The Family Assembly Abducted to North Korea and the Fighters for a Free North Korea, two groups that normally lead such campaigns, did not participate in Thursday's event.

\* This is a translation provided by the newspaper, and it is identical to the Korean version.

1N. Korea Urges Nuke Dialogue With Obama Government (Dong-a Ilbo, January 2, 2009, Front Page)

By Reporter Shin Seok-ho

North Korea yesterday stepped up its criticism of the South Korean government and urged the South Korean people to launch anti-government struggles in a joint newspaper editorial.

The North, however, claimed to be willing to engage in nuclear disarmament talks with the incoming U.S. administration and expressed hope for improved relations with the United States.

Under the title "Blowing Horns for a Concerted March, Let's Usher in a New Year of Revolution," the communist country's three major newspapers branded the South Korean government and the ruling camp as "power brokers who have betrayed the nation."

The dailies also called the Seoul government and the ruling party "anti-unification forces going counter to the time of independent unification while currying favor with the United States and being hostile to fellow Koreans."

Pyongyang blamed the Lee Myung-bak Administration for aggravating inter-Korean relations.

The editorial urged South Korea to implement the two joint declarations signed by President Lee's two liberal predecessors and North Korean leader Kim Jong-il in the 2000 and 2007 inter-Korean summits.

The North urged people in the South to intensify their struggle to "topple the conservative, non-patriotic and fascist regime and eliminate the risk of war."

This joint editorial is the first by Pyongyang since the 2000 inter-Korean summit to denounce Seoul.

In contrast, the three dailies had friendlier messages for the United States and neighboring countries. "The validity of our Republic's independent foreign policy, aimed at the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and securing peace and safety in Northeast Asia and the world, is increasingly bearing fruit."

Pyongyang mentioned "denuclearization" in its New Year's editorial for the first time in 13 years. In 1996, it said it will seek "sweeping and complete abolition of nuclear weapons."

Yesterday's editorial omitted previous criticism of Washington and demands for the suspending joint military drills and withdrawing U.S. troops stationed in the South.

Declaring 2009 as the year of a "new revolution," the communist country pledged to revive its economy by 2012 under a new economic initiative similar to the Chollima Movement of the 1950s.

Under Chollima, all North Koreans were mobilized for economic development.

In its New Year's joint editorial issued last year, Pyongyang defined 2012 as the year to pave the way for a strong country. 2012 will mark the 100th anniversary of the birth of the country's founder Kim Il-sung and the 70th birthday of Kim Jong-il.

\* This is a translation provided by the newspaper, and it is identical to the Korean version.

Stephens